Regular and Irregular
THOUGHTS
IN
Poets and Orators:

LONDON.

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Regular and *Irregular*

THOUGHTS
In Poets and Orators.
I. PART.

CHAP. I.
Of Thoughts in general.

THoughts are natural agitations of the Mind on any ſubject; whereby we firſt of all gaze at, conſider, muze upon, and converſe with thoſe Images of Things which our Senſes for the moſt part orignially repreſent to our Fancies; and our Fancies from them paint forth in our Minds. There are Two ſorts of Thoughts; thoſe of the *Underſtanding*, and thoſe of the *Will*: Thoſe of the *Underſtanding* are Fourfold, according to the Four Parts of *Logick*; Perception, Judgment, Ratiocination, and Method. But as for the Thoughts of the *Will*, they admit of ſo many Modifications and Determinations, that they cannot conveniently be brought into order.

Again, Thoughts are diſtinguiſhed in ſundry regards: (1.) In regard of their *Morality*; good or evil Thoughts: (2.) In regard of their *Quality*, as certain and doubtful Thoughts: (3.) Some are Speculative and others Practick: (4.) In regard of the *Occaſion*; ſome are quiet, and ſome troubleſom: (5.) Some pat, and others unfit: (6.) In regard of *Time*, ſome are of the Day, and ſome of the Night: (7.) In regard of their *ſucceſs*, ſome are lucky, and ſome unſucceſsful: (8.) In regard of their *manner*, ſome are Ingenious and Witty, others Odd and Vitious: and of theſe latter ſort it is that I am about to ſpeak, without pretending to preſcribe Laws to any, but leave every one at liberty to think as they pleaſe.

The Mind of Man is naturally active and prone to Thoughts: In a moment, with the flight of a Thought, it mounts from Earth to Heaven, and back again from age to age, from preſent to future; like Lightning it ſhoot's from Eaſt to Weſt, vaniſhing in appearance. It requires then no little skill to bound the ramble and excurſions of our Thoughts; which extend themſelves even to Things that are not, that have no other Being but what they borrow from the Poets Fancy, by a tumultuary compounding of Notions inſtead of Real; can create fictitious Objects for their entertainment, and divert themſelves with *Chimera's* of their own Creation, as with the moſt real and ſubſtantial Beings.

CHAP.

CHAP. II

The Nature and Diviſion of Regular Thoughts.

REgular Thoughts in Poets and Orators, are witty, lively Agitations of the Mind, elegantly adapted to the ſubject: They contain much Senſe in few Words, and are proper only to the Works of the Mind, to Poeſie and Eloquence, *&c.* They are Diamonds, whoſe rich Subſtance enhances their price more than their *Brillant.* They are, I ſay, pointed Diamonds, not yet ſet; rich Marble, not yet cut; fair Statues, not yet plac'd. *Seneca* and *Macrobius* call pleaſing *Sophiſms*; what we call *Wit*, or our *Engliſh Apollo* calls *Propriety of Thoughts and Words:* the Italians *Vivacities of the Mind*; and the Spaniards *ſharpneſs.* *Ariſtotle* brings almoſt all the Art of thinking Wittily, to the *Metaphor*, as the *light of the mind.* *Comte Teſauro* holds, that witty Expreſſions are but Figured *Enthymemas* which pleaſe the mind; becauſe the ſentence concluded conſiſts of contraries, like Muſick made of skilful Diſcords; ſuch as *wanton modeſty, learned Ignorance.*

The Doctrin, or Anatomy of ingenious Thoughts may be brought to theſe Three Heads; their *Subſtance*, their *Ornaments*, and their *Vices*.

I. The eſſential Subſtance of an ingenious Thought is to be True and Natural.

II. The main Ornaments are Four; noble, pleaſing, delicate, and clear.

III. But out of an affectation of too much Wit, ingenious Thoughts often become Irregular and Viſcious, that is to ſay, quite contrary to the former Conditions, *Falſe*, *Swell'd*, *Affected*, *unrefin'd*, and *Obſcure*. This is the Diviſion of the enſuing Treatiſe.

CHAP. III.

Of True and Natural Thoughts.

I.

TRuth is the firſt Eſſential Condition, and as it were the Ground of Ingenious and Regular Thoughts. Nothing in reality is fine, but what is True; Truth only is lovely even in Fables. All Perſons love Truth, and feel it within themſelves: So that when we read

read what is true, 'tis neither the Book nor the Author that makes us find it ſo, but rather ſomthing we carry within our ſelves, which is an emanation of eternal Light and Truth. Thus, when we read a Paſſion we find within our ſelves the Truth of what we read. Chriſts Inſtructions begin by theſe words: *I ſay to you in truth, Luke* 4, 15.

Our Thoughts are *True* when they repreſent things faithfully; and they are more or leſs true, as they are more or leſs conformable to the Object. The moſt beautiful Thoughts are Irregular, Unfit, and Vitious; or rather thoſe that paſs for Beautiful, and which ſeem ſuch, but are not ſo in reality, if this Ground is wanting.

II.

A full conformity with the Object, is what we call *exactneſs of Thought*; that is to ſay, that as our cloaths are exactly fitted, when they ſuite well to our Bodies, and are in all reſpects fit for the Perſon that wears them: So likewiſe are thoughts *exact*, when they are pat to the Things they repreſent. Thus, an *exact Thought*, properly ſpeaking, is a Thought true in all reſpects. Thus ſays *Auſonius* excellently well of *Dido*.

Infelix Dido nulli benè nupta Marito:
Hoc pereunte fugis: hoc fugiente peris.

Lucan

Lucan says, 'Tis a great misfortune to overcome in a Civil War.

Usquè adeò miserum est civili vincere bello.

A happy Man knows not whether he is beloved.

------ *Felix se nescit amari.*

But it belongs not to every one to think thus *exactly*. To that purpose, a Man must have his Wit rightly set in his Brain, and be of sound Judgment.

III.

Truth is consistant with Figured Speeches, such as Metaphors, Equivocals, Ironies, & Hyperbolies well managed; as, *burning with Love*; *whiter than Snow*, &c.

IV.

To think well we must imitate Nature, which Painters follow close. Now I understand by *Natural* in matter of Thoughts, that which is not far fetched, which the nature of the Matter offers of it self, and arises out of the Subject it self. I understand I know not what kind of Beauty, which is plain without

out Art. One would think that a natural Thought ſhould come to every one; one would think we had it in our head before we read it. It ſeems eaſie to be found, and coſt nothing, ſo ſoon as we meet with it. It ſome ſort it comes leſs from the mind of him that thinks, than from the thing whereof he ſpeaks. Finally, a Natural Thought reſembles in ſome ſort a Living Spring, riſing in a Garden, and not brought thither by Art.

The perfection of a Natural Thought comes uſually from a pure Expreſſion, and an eaſie Turn.

There is the ſame difference between a natural and flat Thought, as between a good Sauce, and one that is high ſeaſon'd with Pepper & Salt. There is difference between a Natural Thought, I ſay; as in this; *Lucinius was reveng'd of Fortune by the Invectives he made againſt her*; And one that is not ſo, as in this other; *Man's blood to be reveng'd of Iron its mortal Enemy*; which helps to ſhed it; *makes it Ruſt*, ſays *Pliny*; *à ferro Sanguis Humanus ſe ulciſcitur.* This revenge attributed to Blood is not Natural.

V.

Some Thoughts are not only True and Natural, but *lively* alſo; ſuch are theſe of *Ovid* repreſenting

his misfortunes, and how tedious Time was to him in his Affliction.

Sum miſer; hæc brevis eſt noſtrorum ſumma laborum:
Cumque meis curis omnia longa facit.

CHAP. IV.

Of noble, ſtrong, magnificent Thoughts.

TRuth is not enough in matter of ingenious Thoughts, there muſt alſo be added ſomthing that's extraordinary, and which ſtrikes the Mind with that which is lofty, wonderful, and *ornamental.* The ſublime, great, and majeſtick Thought, is that which tranſports the Mind to it. There are chiefly two ſorts of noble Thoughts: Firſt, thoſe which relate to things belonging to God: Next, thoſe which belong to Men. *Tacitus and Taſſo,* are the richeſt of Authors in maſculine Thoughts

II.

Holy *Scripture* is a ſtock of ſublime Thoughts relating to God; as theſe, *I am that I am. Let Light be*

be made, and Light was made. Both which, tho ſeemingly plain in terms, yet give they a majeſtick Notion of Gods Power and Exiſtence. There's much loftineſs alſo in what a *Greek* Father ſays; *That Chriſtianity* is an *imitation of the Divine Life*; And a *Latin* Father; *That 'tis a Godlike Revenge, to love our Enemies.*

III.

Next, the ſublimity of Thought ariſes from things belonging indeed to Men, but things which paſs for great and illuſtrious, ſuch as Power, Beauty, Wit, Courage, Victories, Triumph, and the like; or from Men's excelling, either in Arts or Hiſtory: Thus *Taſſo* ſays of a *Sarazin:* That *he threatned Chriſtians, tho dead*; that is; there remained in the face of the dead *Barbarian*, a threatning Countenanceal.

Again, when *Parmenio* made to *Alexander* ſome mean and Self-Intereſted propoſals; *If I miſtake not*, reply'd that Hero, *I am a King and not a Merchant, Me, non Mercatorem memini eſſe, ſed Regem. Q. Curtius.* Methinks this anſwer was very Heroical.

IV.

Some Thoughts are not only noble and lofty, but

magnificent alſo; as this of a modern Speaking to a great King; *What the Hills have that's moſt ſolid and lofty*, ſays he, *and what the Thunder has moſt bright and dreadful, wou'd not expreſs enough, neither the vaſtneſs of your Soul, nor the activity of your Mind.*

This Thought of *Tacitus* is *ſtrong*. *Tiberius*, ſays he, few days before his death, recovering out of a Swoon, feign'd, as much as he could, that he was well; hereupon *Tacitus* ſays, *Jam Tiberium corpus, jam vires, mundum diſſimulatio deſerebat.*

Demoſthenes ſpeaking of Valliant Souldiers, ſays; *That the courage of the Souldiers who were killd in fighting bravely, were the Soul of* Greece.

The glory of an honeſt Man unjuſtly accuſed, and layden with Irons, is no way impair'd by thedarkneſs of the Hole; ſays *Seneca*: He takes away from the Priſon it ſelf, what makes it Infamous: *Carcerem intravit, ignominiam de loco detracturus.*

V.

Compariſons well choſen, and drawn from Matter naturally Great, always raiſe the nobleſt Thoughts. Thus *Longinus* compares *Demoſthenes* to a Storm, and to a Thunderbolt which makes havock.

VI.

Silence ſomtimes expreſſes the Sentiments of a generous Soul; as the ſilence of *Ajax*, ſcorning to reply

reply to *Ulysses*'s base submission; and has something in it greater, than what can be expreſt.

VII.

On the contrary, the *ſtrength of the Expreſſion* contributes ſometimes to the ſublimneſs of a Thought, of which Scripture has rich Examples, in the fall of the Wicked; which is greater than the deſtruction of *Troy*, *Rome*, or *Carthage*. Thus, *I have ſeen the wicked ſpreading himſelf like a green Bay Tree: yet he paſſed away, and lo he was not; I ſought him, but he could not be found.* Pſalm 37, 35. *From the Lords ſight earth and heaven fled*, Revel. 20, 11.

CHAP. V.

Of pleaſing, agreeable Thoughts.

I.

ORnamental Thoughts of the next kind, are *pleaſing* ones, which ſometimes ſurprize us much as the ſublime ones do. Noble Thonghts indeed pleaſe, becauſe they have ſomthing in them which charms the Mind; whereas the others pleaſe, becauſe

agreeable

agreeable by their Nature: And what is ſo charming in them, is as in certain Pictures, ſomthing that is ſoft, tender, and graceful. 'Tis partly that *molle atque facetum*, which *Horace* gives to *Virgil*, and which conſiſts in I know not what gracefulneſs, which we cannot define in general, and yet whereof there are ſeveral ſorts.

Their *delightfulneſs* may ariſeaccording to *Demetrius*, from the nature of Objects which pleaſe of themſelves; *Sunt etiam nonnullæ venuſtates in rebus*; ſuch as are Flowers, Light, Fair Days, and all things that flatter the Senſes. The Works of Monſieur *Voiture* are full of pleaſing Thoughts. Thus, ſpeaking of a Princeſs, ſays he; *Having paſt through a Flower Garden, and ſpacious walks full of Orange Trees, ſhe came at length to a Grove, into which light had not entred, but as it entred with her.*

II.

Ingenious *Viſions* cauſe pretty Thoughts. *Marini* ſays in one of his *Idyls*, that *after the death of* Orpheus, *Bees were ſeen to ſuck the ſtrings of his Lyre.* Doubtleſs, they fancied to find in thoſe ſtrings the taſte of their Honey; and indeed, what we call Melody, is a *Greek* word, which ſignifies a Song ſeaſon'd with Honey.

If

If the Doctrin of *Tranſmigration* were credible, ſays another Poet, I would believe, that the famous Muſicians of Antiquity, *Muſæus*, *Amphion*, *Orpheus*, and *Arion*, return in the Spring, and enter into the Bodies of our *Nightingals*, to charm us in their Melody.

Another Poet ſays, that the *Nightingal* is a feathered Voice, a flying Sound.

What *Taſſo* ſays of the Roſe-bud, is florid, that the leſs it ſhews it ſelf, the more beautiful it is; and *Marini* calls it the Eye of the Spring.

III.

Compariſons well choſen, and drawn from florid & delightful Matters, afford pleaſing Thoughts: *Thankful Perſons are like thoſe Fruitful Grounds, which return much more than they receiv'd.*

IV.

Fiction, or ſomthing Poetical in Proſe, makes Thoughts agreeable, ſays *Hermogines*, *Fabulæ in ſententiis maximè afferunt ſuavitatem & delectationem in Oratione. De Formis Orat. cap.* 4. Such are *Lucians Dialogues of the Dead*, which have a very witty and pleaſing Character.

Lively

V.

Lively *Metaphors* are of their nature Fountains of pleasing Thoughts, when not continued too long; and nothing perhaps flatters more the Mind, than the representation of an Object under a Foreign Figure. We delight, says *Aristotle*, to behold one thing in another. Yet must we not heap up Metaphors one upon another; because so many Foreign Figures mixt together, breed confusion in the Readers mind. Thus, *Voiture* again says of a Princess; *From her Infancy she stole the whiteness of Snow, and from Pearls their brightness; she took the Beauty and Light of the Stars; and few days past, but she stole some Rays from the Sun, and deckt herself therewith.*

VI.

Antitheses not Affected, but well husband, please infinitely the Mind. They do much about the same effect, as Lights and Shades in Painting, or, as Basses and Trebles set with skill in Musick. As here, Life, properly speaking, is not to live, but to be in Health. *Non est vivere, sed valere, Vita.* Mart. Lib. 12.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of delicate and curious Thoughts.

NOW I muſt ſpeak of a third kind of ornamental Thoughts, which, beſides pleaſure, have a curious delicacy; or rather, whoſe curiouſneſs, beauty, and worth, ariſe from their Delicacy. 'Tis hard to tell what delicacy of Thought means; for, tho we frequently ſpeak the Word, yet have we not a clear Notion thereof. I only can ſay, that there are good Wits, and good Paınters, who are neither fine nor delicate; ſuch as *Albertus Durer*, and *Ruben*. The Works of *Ruben* have more of the fiery Genius, than of Antient Beauty; and tho there is both Life and Greatneſs in what he wrought, his Figures are rather courſe than fine. Whereas the Paintings of *Raphael* have with much Greatneſs, inimitable Gracefulneſs, with all the Delicacy poſſible. Delicacy in the Proper is eaſier to be defin'd, than in the Figur'd. If you ask me what Delicacy is, as to Perfumes, Meat, or Muſick, I might perhaps ſatisfie you; but if you ask me what a delicate Thought is, I know not how to find words

to expreſs my ſelf! ſuch airy Notions are hard to be expreſt: all we can do, is to view them near at hand, and at ſeveral times, to attain the knowledge thereof by little and little. To frame then to our ſelves ſome notion of ingenious Delicacy, let's not content our ſelves to ſay, *that a delicate Thought is the fineſt production of the Mind, and the Flower of Wit:* For, that's to ſay nothing, in a matter ſo difficult.

A delicate curious Thought is wrapt up in few words; and the Senſe contained therein, is not ſo plain: It ſeems partly to conceal itſelf, that we may ſeek after and gueſs it out. The words are like a thin veil through which we perceive it; and this little myſtery is, as it were, the Soul of the delicacy of Thoughts. So that it only belongs to ſharp-ſighted Perſons, to underſtand the whole Senſe of a delicate Thought.

I know not whether I am underſtood; for indeed I ſcarce underſtand my ſelf. But *Examples* perhaps will clear it better, than my Words.

There cannot be a more delicate Thought, than what *Pliny* ſays to his Prince: 'Flattery having long 'ſince exhauſted all the new methods of praiſing the 'Great Ones, the only that remains to celebrate your 'Virtues, is to dare to be ſilent: *Si de te tacere audeamus.* Panegyr.

Ano-

Another said delicately to Cardinal *Richlieu*; as 'twas said of an ancient Souldier; That he could not receive Wounds, but on the Scars he had already receiv'd; *neither can you be prais'd, but by Repetitions.*

II.

Besides, the delicacy of ingenious Thoughts, there are others wherein the *Affection* has greater share, than the Understanding. *Ovid* excels in this kind: and his *Heroic Epistles* are full of such Thoughts, which Passion makes delicate. Nor does *Catullus* yield to *Ovid* in this point. For instance; 'I shall never see 'you dear Brother, you that are dearer to me than 'Life; but I shall always love you: *At tamen semper amabo.*

III.

The most curious Thoughts by often repeating, awake us not, and cease to be delicate and fine. 'Tis then Novelty, or a new Turn at least, which sets a gloss on a Thought.

IV.

Sometimes a little *Allegory* gives cunningly to understand what we mean; but it must not be too long

to

to prove pleasing. Here is an excellent *Allegory* made on the *Bees* in *Urban* VIII. Coat of Arms.

Mella dabunt cunctis, nulli sua spicula figent:
Spicula nam Princeps figere nescit apum.

V.

A *Reflection* subtle and judicious together, helps much to the delicacy of Thought. Such is this of *Tacitus* on *Galba*'s Government. 'He seem'd greater 'than a Private Man, whilst but a Private Person; 'and all held him worthy of the Empire, had he not 'been Emperour. *Et omnium consensu capax Imperii, 'nisi Imperasset.*

VI.

Politick Sentences scatred in History ought above all to be Delicate, because they are to awaken the Reader, and teach him something that is new. *Strada* says, that the greatest Coward turns stout, when he perceives that he is fear'd: *Crescit audatia, si se timeri sentiat.*

VII.

Broken and *mysterious Thoughts*, wherein there is more understood than seen, delight and surprize the Mind,

Mind, by keeping it in ſuſpence: as in excellent Pictures, wherin the skilful always diſcover how the Genius of the Painter went beyond Art. Thus, *Lope de Vega* ſays of a Princeſs alike Beautiful and Valiant; *That ſhe was* Venus *in Peace, and* Mars *in War.*

VIII.

But nothing is more contrary to true Delicacy, than to expreſs things *too much*, and the great Art conſiſts not to ſay all on certain matters; but leave others to think more than we ſay; *quædam non prolata majora videntur, & potius in ſuſpicione Relicta*, ſays *Demetrius*. For, one of the ſureſt means to pleaſe is, not ſo much to ſay and think, as to let others think and ſay; to give only a hint to the Reader: *Nonnulla relinquenda auditori, quæ ſuo marte colligat. De Locution*; becauſe Men are naturally in love with their own Productions.

CHAP. VII.

Of plain and intelligible Thoughts.

CLearneſs being a neceſſary ornament of Eloquence *Prima eſt Eloquentiæ Virtus, perſpicuitas. Quint. lib.*

lib. 2. *cap.* 3. Ingenious and Regular Thoughts ought to be plain, clear, and eaſily underſtood. Without Light, the other Conditions are uſeleſs. Nothing is either delightful, or works upon us, but what we underſtand plainly. For, a Thought being but a Repreſentation, which the Mind frames within itſelf, it ought to repreſent things clearly. Nay, a Thought ought to be ſo plain and clear, that the Reader in reading it, underſtand it at the ſame time, without muſing to know the meaning thereof. That is to ſay, that it enter into the Mind, as Light into the Eyes, *tamquam Sol in Oculos*, when we mind it not. Wherefore the care of him that thinks, ought to be, not that it may be underſtood; but that it cannot be miſunderſtood. *Quare, non ut intelligere poſſit: ſed ne omnino poſſit non intelligere. Quintil. Lib.* 8. *cap.* 2.

But, when all's done, 'tis but little to think well, if we ſpeak ill; nay, the fineſt Thoughts are uſeleſs, according to the Maſters of the Art, without the *ornament of Words.* On the other ſide, there's nothing more extravagant, than a vain Sound of Words; nay, and of the choiceſt too, unleſs grounded on ſubſtantial Thoughts and good Senſe: *Nulla utilitas cogitationis præclaræ eſt, ſi ei quis pulchræ locutionis non addiderit Ornamentum. Dyon. Hallicarnaſſ. de Collat. Verborum.*

Of

OF IRREGULAR THOUGHTS

PART. II.

CHAP. I.

Of Irregular Thoughts in general.

IF we are not careful to govern our Thoughts according to the Rules of good Senſe, and confine our ſelves to the bounds of Nature; we are apt to run into exceſs. *Vitious* Thoughts take the place of true ones; Truth turns to *Falſhood*, ſublime becomes *ſwelling*; Pleaſing is but *Affectation*; Delicacy mere *Refining*; Light *Obſcurity*: And theſe ſundry ſorts of Affectations are attempts of the Mind, both above its Matter and Strength, ſays *Jul. Scaliger*; *Conatus*

ſupra

ſupra vires, & ſupra rem. Poetica Lib. 3. cap. 37.

Attempting, I ſay, to be over-witty, we think ill ſomtimes, and make it too ſublime, too pleaſing, too much refin'd. For, an ornamental Thought proves Vitious in the noble Kind, when we ſtretch it too far: 'tis alſo in the agreeable Kind, when we make it more pleaſing than it ought: 'Tis an exceſs in the Delicate kind, when we run it up to a vain ſubtilty, or rather, fall it into a flat *Nonſenſe. Hoc fit, aut nimio tumore, an nimio cultu. Diomed. Gram. l. 2.* According to *Quintilian*, The leſs wit we have, we ſtrive to ſhew the more; as low Perſons raiſe themſelves on their feet; *ut ſtaturâ breves in digitos eriguntur*; and weak Perſons threaten moſt, *& plura infirmi minantur*, l. 2. c. 3.

CHAP. II.

Of Falſe Thoughts.

I.

A Thought is Falſe, when the Notion we conceive of an Object repreſents it otherwiſe than really it is in itſelf, and ſo deſtroys the very Eſſence and Nature of Things, in attempting to raiſe and adorn them.

Of

Of this nature is what *Arioſto* ſays of one of his Hero's; That in the heat of the Fight, not perceiving that he was kill'd, *he fought on ſtill valiantly, tho dead*; *Et era morto*. And ſuch a falſe Thought is enough to ſpoyl a good Copy of Verſes, becauſe Reaſon is an enemy to Falſhood.

Yet is there great difference between Falſhood & *Fiction*. For, Fiction well ordered according to Rule and Art, agrees well with Truth. The one imitates and perfects Nature, the other ſpoyls and utterly deſtroys it. Fiction or Poetick Fables, are mere works of the Fancy: And *Apollo*, *Parnaſſus*, the *Muſes*, and *Pegaſus*, are but pleaſing Fancies; yet this Syſtem ſuppos'd, they paſs not for Falſe among Scholars, eſpecially when the Fiction is probable.

Thoſe who ſeek after Witticiſms are moſt apt to think falſe, and to run into childiſh Conceits; whatſoever matter they handle, they rather ſeek after glittring Things, than good Senſe. 'Tis ſure a great corruption in the Nature of Man to hunt after falſe Reaſons, when true ones preſent themſelves; and nothing is more irregular, than to think Falſe on true Hiſtorical Events.

II.

What think you of ſome *Preachers* who have charm'd their Auditory even with falſe Conceits, and

trifling Witticisms; as he, who to prove that young People dye sometimes sooner than aged Persons, said, That *John did outrun Peter, and came first to the Sepulchre*, John 20. 4. Or like another, who preaching on Christs Agony in the Garden, said, That he sweated Blood from all parts of his Body, and ought not to weep otherwise, *because God is all Eye.*

III.

Contrary to *exactness*, and Nature, are also certain pretty, but fantastick, Thoughts, very frequent among Spanish Authors, as this of *Gongora*, who fancies a Nightingal singing, to have *a hundred Thousand Nightingals singing at once in his Throat.*

Jetting indeed authorises false Thoughts, and makes them pass for true.

CHAP. III.

Of mean, swell'd, bold, and *extravagant Thoughts.*

I.

MEan Thoughts are directly opposite to noble and sublime ones; as this of our famous Chan-

Chancellour *Bacon*, one of the greateſt Wits of this Age. *Silver is like Dung, which never profits, but when ſpread about.* There is both Truth and Wit in the Thought, but nothing noble, ſince the Notion of a Dunghil is mean and unpleaſant.

II.

Swelling is Vitious, and becomes not our Thoughts, no, not even magnificent Matters, being rather a mark of weakneſs than ſtrength, as we ſee in bloated Bodies. Thus *Graciani*, one of the Spaniſh wits, ſays in his *Hero*; that a great Heart is a *Gyants Heart*; but calls that of *Alexander* an *Archiheart*, in Spaniſh *Archicoracon, and in a corner thereof, all this world was at ſuch eaſe, that there was ſtill room enough for ſix more.* Was there ever any thing farther fetch'd, or more ſwell'd up! This is not only Falſe, but exceſſive, and beyond the Rules of exact Greatneſs.

III.

Thoughts which run on *bold Hyperbolies*, being falſe of themſelves, deſerve not to be put into rational Works: as one that calls *Romances*, *Mountebanks in Paper*; and another calls Ladies long Trains, *Hyperbolies of Cloath*

IV.

Extravagant and fantaſtick Thoughts, are very oppoſite to ſublime ones; as that of *Arioſtos Store-houſe* in the Circle of the Moon, wherein were laid up in a Jarre, *Orland's* wits, whilſt he was ſtruck mad in love of *Angelica*. *Orland furioſo, L.* 3, *Stanz.* 73. 82. Another ſaid; *the Centaure was on Horſe-back on himſelf.*

CHAP. IV.

Of Affected Thoughts.

I.

NOthing that's Affected is either pleaſing or agreeable. Affectation conſiſting no leſs in Thoughts than Words; uſually ariſes from the exceſs we aim at: And this Affectation of Thoughts is the worſt of Vices in matters of Eloquence, becauſe Men ſtrive to avoid the others, but ſeek after this; *Per affectationem decoris corrupta ſententia. Diomed. Gramm.* Lib. 2. The *Italians* are much of the humour of thoſe Women who love to be courted by Men, they ſtill will paint, tho never ſo beautiful, not minding, that they would

pleaſe

pleaſe better, if they ſtudied not ſo much to pleaſe. *Unumquodque genus cum ornatur caſtè pudicèque, fit illuſtrius: Cum fucatur, & prælinitur, fit præſtigioſum. Aul. Gell. Noct. Attic. Lib. 7. cap. 14.* Thus. the Farewel of *Armida* to *Renaldo* is too affected: *O you*, ſays ſhe, *who carry away part of my ſelf, and leave the other; either take the one, or reſtore the other, or give death to both.* Here's too much Art.

II.

Worn-out Thoughts by too often repeating, pleaſe no more, according to the maxim in Philoſophy; *Ab aſſuetis non fit paſſio.* For inſtance, 'tis commonly ſaid of Great Men, that having overcom their Enemies, they have overcom themſelves. Or thus, "The King has overcom Victory itſelf.

III.

Trifling Thoughts, which uſually conſiſt of *Punns*, *Conceits*, and *Equivocals*, dazle only the Vulgar, and impoſe on half-witted Perſons, who are taken with Pelf and Tinſel. They are but falſe Diamonds, *Briſtol* Stones; nothing coſts leſs, or is eaſier to be found; all *Jeſt-Books* are full of them.

Pleaſing

IV.

Pleaſing Thoughts ſtretch'd too far, are againſt the Rules of Exactneſs. Thus *Pallavicini* ſays, " That " *Seneca* perfumes his Thoughts with Amber & Civet, " which at length make the head ache, tho they pleaſe " at firſt. Such are Witticiſms, Antitheſes, & Apoſtrophies, ſpoken in the heigth of Grief. For, is it not ridiculous to ſay at that time, 'I will live as an 'unfortunate Monſter of Love, to whom an unwor-'thy Life is the only puniſhment worthy of his im-'piety. The quibbles of *worthy* and *unworthy* are not proper to *Tanerede's* deep ſorrow.

CHAP. V.

Of over-Refin'd, Subtle Thoughts.

I.

ONE would think one could not be too curious nor delicate, but too much every where, is *Vitious: Vitium eſt ubique quod nimium eſt. Quint. Lib.* 8, *cap.* 3. Delicacy of Thoughts has its bounds, as well as the ſublime & pleaſing. Men over-refine ſometimes with thinking too nicely, and then the Thought dege-

degenerates into a ſubtilty, which ſtretches beyond what we call Delicacy. This ſubtle Refining then is an exquiſite Affectation, or as an *Italian* calls it, *a diſtillation of the Brain*; 'tis not fineneſs, but over ſubtle Refining: Words are wanting to expreſs Things ſo airy, we can ſcarce conceive them, and nothing properly can explain them but *Examples*. Thus a French Poet, ſpeaking of S. *Mary Magdalens* Rock, ſays;

Alambic lambriſſé ſans diminution,
Lambris alambique ſans interruption.

II.

But I inſiſt not on ſuch as this, which is plainly ill, out of too much ſubtilty; but of theſe that ſeem good, and have ſomthing in them that is ſurpriſing at firſt. The ſubtle *Malvezzi* ſeeking out the reaſon *why Novelty is pleaſing*, ſays, That mankind being neceſſitated to dye, behold not willingly decay'd things, which put them in mind of that unavoidable neceſſity.

Mamertin the Emperour, *Julian's* Panegyriſt, ſpeaking of proud Emperours, who had but contempt for their Subjects. They raiſe them to preferment, ſays he, leſt they ſhould not deſpiſe Perſons honored with Dignities.

As

III.

As from over-refining to *Nonſenſe* there is but a ſtep, the paſſage is eaſie from the one to the other; and when they joyn together, 'tis nothing but brightneſs and darkneſs on all ſides. Thus a Spaniard ſays; *That the Crown of* Spain *is the Suns Zodiack on Earth.*

Again, a French Panegyriſt of the late Prince of *Conde*, ſpeaking of his Picture, thus; *This Picture, which never having had a prim'd cloath, being as ſoon made as drawn, had his ſweat mixt with the Enemies Blood for Colours; his Sword for Penſil; his Heart for Painter; his Deſigns for Draughts; and himſelf for Original.* I know not which to admire moſt, either the over-Refining or the Nonſenſe.

Theſe Thoughts muſt needs pleaſe thoſe that love ſubtle Refining.

CHAP. VI.

Of Obſcure Thoughts.

I.

NOthing is more contrary to plain and intelligible Thoughts than Obſcurity, which ariſes chiefly

chiefly from three Cauſes; Firſt, From the Thought itſelf. Secondly, From the Expreſſion. Thirdly, From Hiſtorical Circumſtances; which latter cannot reaſonably be excepted againſt. But I ſpeak of that Obſcurity which is in the Thought it ſelf, whereof there are ſome which may well be compair'd to dark Nights, or thick Foggs, which hinder from ſeeing. Neither Orators nor Poets deſerve to be read, when they make a Myſtery of their Thoughts; They are like thoſe Women that go mask'd in the Streets, or hide themſelves under their Hoods, and will not be known; we muſt let them paſs by, and not ſo much as take notice of thoſe *Apocaliptick* Cypher Writers.

II.

As to the other *Cauſes* of Obſcurity in ingenious Works, it uſually ariſes from *brevity*; for, from binding up things too cloſe, they choak or ſtifle them, as I may ſay; and this makes *Tacitus* ſo Obſcure. There are certain Thoughts that cannot be underſtood without a certain number of Words. It were to be wiſhed, we could impart our Thoughts without the help of Words, as Angels do; but not being pure Spirits, we are forc'd to have recourſe to Language, to expreſs what we think. I like nothing better than to ſay many things in few Words, provided

we make our ſelves underſtood; but the difficulty is to be underſtood; and all the Art conſiſts to take ſuch meaſures, that clearneſs impaires not ſtrength, nor ſtrength clearneſs.

III.

But on the contrary ſide, the Senſe is often loſt in the abundance of Words. For, ſuch there are who ſay nothing, tho they talk much.

IV.

Equivocal is when the Thought has, as it were, two Faces, and we know not in which ſenſe to take it; or are in doubt whether it be true or falſe. Thus *Graciani* ſpeaking of the Mind, ſays, *That the Underſtanding is the King of Attributes*; meaning, that it is the predominant Perfection in Man. *And he that of his Will knows to make a Sacrament, is a Soveraign over himſelf*; meaning, to conceal the motions of our Heart, and make a Myſtery thereof to others.

V.

Another Cauſe of Obſcurity is, when the Thought is *maim'd* (if I may ſay ſo) and imperfect. Me-

thinks

thinks ſuch obſcure and confus'd Writers, inſtead of their Thoughts, repreſent to us the *Chaos*.

The Cloſe.

After all, to Think and Write well, 'tis not enough to read choice, and excellent Authors. But in Writing we muſt have always before our Eyes ſeveral Perſons as Witneſſes, nay, as Judges of our Thoughts. Thus, to avoid falſe, affected, and blund'ring Thoughts, we muſt propoſe to our ſelves a Man of a right, natural, and ſound Underſtanding, and ask our ſelves, would this ſatisfie ſuch a one? would this have contented Sir *Philip Sydney*? Or perhaps it would not be amiſs if we thought of my Lord *Bacon*, whoſe Judgment was ſo exact, that he was not ſatisfied with pretty things, but would have fair and good ones.

For Noble Thoughts, we might repreſent to our ſelves *Milton*, whoſe *Paradiſe Loſt* is full of ſuch. For pleaſing, delicate Thoughts, our *Waller*; or the French *Voiture*. And as for clear and intelligible Thoughts, it would not perhaps be amiſs, to have in proſpect ſome Perſons not of ſo quick Underſtanding, and to ſay to our ſelves ſomtimes, would Mr. ſuch

such a one understand my Thoughts well? But above all, to avoid the Character of certain Persons, who dislike all Thoughts that are Natural; who seek not to adorn, but to paint Truth; to whom nothing that is proper pleases: *Quid quod nihil proprium placet. Tull. de Orat.* Finally, who think they have no wit, but when others need much to understand them.

FINIS.

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